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ANNUAL REPORT.

THE annual meeting of the Society in May, 1894, was largely devoted to the discussion of the present condition and prospects of the study of Dante in English-speaking countries, and of the possibilities of more extended usefulness for the Society itself. There was never a time when study of the poet was more general in England and America, or when more and better equipped scholars were undertaking the interpretation of him. The recent experiments in translating him into English have been numerous; and many of them are of a high degree of interest. Furthermore, the appliances for the study of his works, both scholarly and, so to say, mechanical, are rapidly multiplying and improving among us. It is significant that the first attempt to print in a single volume a complete and trustworthy text of all the works ascribed to Dante should be that of an Englishman, the Rev. Dr. Edward Moore, now in the press. It is also interesting that an American university (Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y.) should during the past year have received, through the liberality of Prof. Willard Fiske,

one of the most important collections of books on Dante in the world. This, with the Dante Society's own collection, in the Harvard College Library, gives American scholars unsurpassed opportunities for the prosecution of their studies.

In view of these facts, it is desirable that all appropriate means should be employed by the Dante Society to further the purposes for which it was originally organized. It has already done much for Dante studies in America. The mere association in its membership of several of the most eminent Dante scholars this country has had, has been a useful influence. Furthermore, its Annual Report, with the usual accompaniments of a piece of scholarly work upon Dante and of a Dante bibliography, has been of great service. The Dante prize, offered by a member, and administered by the Society, has attracted a number of cultivated young persons to the study of the poet. The Dante collection in the Harvard College Library, already mentioned,—a collection established and largely maintained by the Society,—has been at once useful to scholars, and impressive as affording ocular evidence of the preciousness of Dante to many generations of men. And, finally, the Society has been able to provide for, or to give aid towards the publication of several works on Dante of permanent importance,—notably, Dr. Fay's *Concordance of the Divina Commedia*, and Mr. Latham's *Translation of Dante's Letters*.

It is to be hoped that the activity and influence of the Society in all these ways may be maintained and increased. Especially is it desirable that the Society's efforts in the way of publication and of fostering publication on Dante in English should be considerably greater in the future than in the past. Here is a large field of usefulness, already partially occupied by the Society, but in which much remains to be done. One important task has already been undertaken by members of the Society, and only the work of arranging and editing the materials has to be completed in order to proceed to print. This is a concordance to the lesser Italian works of Dante, similar in plan to Dr. Fay's *Concordance*. The cards for this are all made out, and are now in the hands of the Secretary. A similar undertaking, which it is to be hoped we may be able to carry through in the near future, is a concordance to the Latin works. Other projects of great prospective utility to students of Dante have already been suggested. Such are: the systematic publication, with English translations, of the vision-literature of the Middle Ages; the publication of extracts from the works of the Schoolmen and of the Chroniclers, illustrative of Dante; a revision of Blanc's *Vocabolario Dantesco*; the publication both of special researches and of treatises of larger scope, throwing light upon phases of Dante's life and work, and showing his influence upon European thought and art.

For the carrying out of these projects, however, it is indispensable that a larger income than the Society now has should be at its disposal. As the annual statements of the Treasurer have shown, the sums hitherto received in annual fees have sufficed only for the publication of the Annual Report and for the maintenance of the Dante Collection in the Harvard College Library. It is very desirable that by additional membership the income of the Society shall be so increased that at least one volume a year may be issued in addition to the Report. The Council has now made a favorable arrangement with the publishing house of Ginn & Co., Boston, for the issue, at a fair profit to the Society, of whatever it may wish to print. The Council believe that in time the sale of its publications will to some extent help defray the expense of new volumes. At first, however, the cost of these must be met by the Society; and, as is well known, the returns from books of the proposed character are somewhat slow. For the successful undertaking of the proposed plans, therefore, the number of members of the Society ought to be greatly increased. The Council feel little doubt that energetic action by the present members would speedily result in the desired addition to our membership, and that the Society could thus be enabled to accomplish more successfully the objects for which it exists.

The report is accompanied this year by an Index of Proper Names in the Prose Works and Canzoniere of

Dante, contributed by a member of the Society, Paget Toynbee, Esq.; and by a list of books and articles in periodicals, relating to Dante, received at the Harvard College Library during the year ending May 1, 1894. As will be seen, many of these additions to the Society's collection have been given by their authors. To these, and to other benefactors of the Society, it desires to express publicly its gratitude.

ARTHUR RICHMOND MARSH, *Secretary.*

For the Council of the Dante Society.